COIT11239 Mob Writing

Group Members

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Summary

Muriel E. Scott (2013) delved into the issues and benefits that Global Virtual Teams (GVTs) face while providing a case study for how to counteract the common issues.

Through the report, Muriel uncovers the characteristics of effective GVTs and how they overcome challenges through various strategies used by real work companies. The study follows Team Amit as they use a process known as Scrum to work successfully despite issues faced.

The author quotes Paasivaara, et al (2008), to define Scrum as “an iterative type of software development process termed ‘‘agile’’ because it allows a team to quickly make adjustments as needed in the work plan.“ Scrum also encourages ideals such as “communicate through the roof”, suggesting frequent discussion between team members, and “‘we are one team”, enforcing teamwork between all members on equal footing (Muriel E. Scott, 2013).

The case study is also potentially outdated considering that it dates back to 2013. During this time gap, new strategies may have been founded and new issues may have been discovered. In the same way, a rise in GVTs due to changing work environments has also remodelled the way these teams’ function.

Questions

Identify & explain the communication challenges that global virtual teams face:

The three main characteristics that lead to communication challenges amongst GVTs are:

* Distance, time and culture.

These aspects lead to issues such as:

* Trust issues and conflicts due to differences in culture.
  + Trust is needed for high levels of work
* It is harder to facilitate communication and cooperation through an online medium compared to being face to face IRL.
  + Easier to conform to norms of the group when face to face
  + Develop a greater identity as a group when interacting in person
* Conflicts being more severe and persisting for longer
  + Communication through text mediums often leads to greater conflict since context is lost in text
  + Less information sharing
  + Lack of developing interpersonal relationships (at a distance)
* Differing time zones
  + Can lead to imbalance of participation if group communication occurs outside of someone’s time zone
  + One party can get favoured in scheduling over another
  + Teams can split into competitive subgroups based off geography (us vs them mindset)
* Different cultures define social protocol differently
  + Different views on a topic or way of acting
  + Seclude other people via use of other language
* One culture in multicultural teams dominating more than others
  + Unequal power status
  + People feeling uncomfortable fully participating
  + Us and them mentality which could lead to antagonization
* Difficulty due to language differences and barriers
  + Language defines how people think and express themselves

Identify & discuss the benefits that diversity in teams offers for the development of ICT systems:

Though the aforementioned characteristics do have their challenges, the diversity GVTs offer can provide many advantages to a team.

While the aforementioned distance, time, and cultural differences do have their challenges, the diversity made possible by GVTs can provide many benefits to a team.

These benefits include but are not limited to:

* Being able to hire the right people for the job, regardless of location
  + Don’t need to worry about them moving
* People from outside the US are cheaper to hire
  + Improve profits for the hiring business
  + Could hire more and gain a larger volume of workers if necessary
* Having closer access to observe the local markets, and therefore lead on to the global market
  + Provides businesses with more opportunities
* Having multiple different perspectives can prompt healthy conflict and provide unique points of view to help solve challenges

Provide one recommendation for global virtual team members to improve their communication:

Recommend for them to follow the rule of Scrum, which entails:

Communicating with each other extensively through frequent and regular video conferencing. This method creates a similar situation of face-to-face communication that GVTs lack compared to in person teams. As such, this allows them to stay in touch about their respective progress and the status of their work. This also facilitates sharing of information more effectively, which helps the team avoid misunderstandings in the long run. Goal setting and commitment to follow those goals helps them avoid issues that plague ineffective teams, paving the way for effective communication.

The use of the philosophy that a team is ‘“one big family” assists in suppressing the “us vs them” mentality that often arises within GVTs.

Referencing

Scott, M.E. (2013). *‘Communicate Through the Roof’: A Case Study Analysis of the Communicative Rules and Resources of an Effective Global Virtual Team*. Communication Quarterly, 61(3), pp.301–318.

Paasivaara, M., Durasiewicz, S., & Lassenius, C. (2008). *Using scrum in a globally distributed project: A case study*. Software Process Improvement and Practice, 13, 527–544.